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## GENERAL NOTES.

**The Waters of Galilee.**—Galilee was a well watered country. The words of promise spoken to the Hebrews in regard to the land which they were to enter, "a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths springing from valleys and hills" (Deut. viii. 7), would be truer of Galilee than of any other section. The lakes of this province, with their blue, transparent waters, contribute not a little to the charming beauty of the landscapes. The water of Lake Merom is sweet, as is also that of Lake Tiberias, and crystal clear (Wars, III. 10 : 7). The Rabbis find it difficult to praise enough their beautiful lake, which was justly the pride of their whole land. They speak, in a phrase already quoted, of its "gracefully flowing" or "gliding waters." Jehovah, they said, had created seven seas, and of these he had chosen the Sea of Gennesareth as his special delight. The names of these seas are given as the Great Sea, or the Mediterranean; the Sea of Tiberias, which was also known to them as Genusar; the Sea of Samecho, known in Josephus as Semechonitis; the Salt Sea, or the Sea of Sodom; the Sea of Hultha; the Sea of Shelhath, or Sheliyath; and the Sea of Apamia (Tal. Jer., Kilaim 32 *a*).

The Jordan, the only stream in Palestine deserving the name of "river," with its "sources," its "floods," and its remarkably winding course, belonged, at least in its upper and finer half, to Galilee. Perhaps the Litany, where it bends from a southerly to a westerly course, touched upon the northern frontier of this province. Here belonged the Kishon, the famous "river of battle," called in the song of Deborah and Barak "that ancient river" (Judges v. 21). It took its rise near the foot of Tabor, went in a winding course across the plain of Esdraelon, and entered the Bay of Acre near the foot of Carmel. A principal feeder of this stream came from Gilboa and Engannim. It received "the waters of Megiddo" not far from the town of the same name. When the Kishon was at its height, it would be, partly on account of its quicksands, as impassable as the ocean itself to a retreating army (Van de Velde, I. p. 289). The river Belus should also be mentioned, which entered the sea near Acre, and from the fine sand of whose bed the Phœnecians, according to tradition, first made glass. The present name of the stream with which so important a fact is connected, is Nahr N'aman; but we are not so certain as to what name it bore in the early Hebrew history. In Josh. xix. 27, we find a Shichor Libnath mentioned, which has been thought to be identical with the river Belus of Josephus and Pliny. But this is doubted by so eminent a scholar as Mr. George Grove (Smith's Bible Dictionary, IV. p. 2996), who thinks even that the Hebrew words do not refer to any river.

"No less than four springs pour forth their almost full-grown rivers through the plain" of Gennesareth. "Beautiful springs, characteristic of the whole valley of the Jordan, are unusually numerous and copious along the western shore of the lake" (Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, p. 366). Half an hour north of the town of Tiberias are five or six profuse springs lying near together and called the "cool fountains," to distinguish them from the hot ones south of the city. Ritter speaks of "the hundred brooks" that distribute their waters through the neighborhood of Banias, "carrying fertility everywhere" (Ritter, II. pp. 192, 262). Thomson speaks of "the ample supply of water about Ayûn. Six streams have been counted

flowing into lake Huleh from the mountains lying west of it,—the largest of which streams is from forty to fifty feet wide. The abundance of dew which falls about Tabor, remarked by Burekhardt, Robinson, and others, was of the utmost importance to vegetation in that immediate neighborhood. The “dew of Hermon” was long ago praised (Ps. cxxxiii. 3), and the rich vegetation of the surrounding region is largely due to this fructifying influence. The perpetual snow on Hermon proved no doubt an unspeakable blessing to the people of this province, freshening the atmosphere by day, and cooling it by night (Tacitus, *Hist.* V. 9). The snow was even carried to Tyre, Sidon, and Damascus as a luxury, and laborers sweltering in the hot harvest fields used it to cool the water which they drank (Prov. xxv. 13 ; Jer. xviii. 14). No doubt Herod Antipas at his feasts in Tiberias enjoyed also from this very source the modern luxury of ice-water! Not only were ice and snow from the mountains used for the purpose now indicated, but the inhabitants of this city had still another method of making warm water cool and delightful. This method was in use throughout the Jordan valley, and especially in Jericho, where the heat was intense. Water from the fountain, lake, or stream was put into earthen jars, which were of a great variety of sizes, according to the needs of families or individuals, and these were exposed to the air, generally in a sheltered place, and where a draft was felt. In this manner it became extremely cold even in the hottest weather, and was regarded as one of the greatest comforts of life. In ministering to the sick, and in entertaining weary travelers, “a cup of cold water” (Matt. x. 42) was not only refreshing, it was more highly prized than a bag of gold (Wars, III. 10 : 7 ; IV. 8 : 3).

The warm springs of this province are also to be noticed : at Biram, Gadara, and Tiberias, of which those at the last place were, perhaps, the most renowned. “These three springs,” the Rabbis say, “remained after the deluge.” The exact location of Biram is not known (Neubauer, pp. 36, 37; Graetz, III. p. 392 ; Arnaud, p. 258 ; Sinai and Palestine, p. 366 ; Ritter, II. p. 246), nor do the limits of this work permit us to describe the remarkable springs at Gadara. There is a large cluster of them near Tiberias. Some of these are hot, and are called by the Rabbis “the boiling waters” (Neubauer, pp. 24, 35). The supply of water in the largest is sufficient to turn the wheels of mills (Ritter, II. p. 246, from Burekhardt). Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* V. 15), referring to these springs, uses the expression, “which are so conducive to the restoration of health,” as though their medicinal qualities were widely known. Josephus (*Life XVI.*) reports that when he was governor of Galilee, his enemy, John of Gischala, asked him for “permission to come down and use the hot baths of Tiberias for the benefit of his health.” The permission was granted, although John really desired it as an opportunity of carrying out his schemes of political intrigue. We find a case where a certain famous Rabbi, Joshua Ben Levi, being sick, bathed in these warm springs, supporting himself meantime on the arm of a friend (Jer. Talmud, Shabbath 3 a). These springs were indeed one of the “watering places” of that age and country, the delightful resort of people of means, and were visited also with great benefit by the feeble or sick of the land, on account of the healing properties of the waters. People were attracted hither from Jerusalem and all other parts of the land, and no doubt the city of Tiberias was, by this means, greatly increased both in size and importance.

If, in a word, we think of the numberless brooks and mountain torrents, the springs, besides the warm ones already mentioned, the reservoirs, the aqueducts and watercourses, remains of which exist about the plain of Gennesareth and elsewhere (Recovery of Jerusalem, p. 272), the fountains, the cisterns, and the wells, we have a land in which there was no lack of water, and one surprisingly favored in this respect above Judea.

**A Peculiarity of Palestine.**—In Greece and Italy and Spain, it is the mountainous tract which is beset with banditti—the level country which is safe. In Palestine, on the contrary, the mountain tracts are comparatively secure, though infested with villages of hereditary ruffians here and there ; but the plains, with hardly an exception, are more or less dangerous. Perhaps the most striking contrast is the passage from the Hauran and plain of Damascus, to the uplands of the Lebanon and anti-Lebanon, with their quiet villages, and fruit-gardens, breathing an atmosphere almost of European comfort and security. The cause is soon told. Palestine is an island in a desert waste—but from this very fact it is also an island in the midst of pirates. The Bedouin tribes are the corsairs of the wilderness ; the plains which run into the mountains are the creeks into which they naturally penetrate. Far up the plains of Philistia and Sharon come the Arabs of the Tih ; deep into the centre of Palestine, into the plain of Esdraelon, especially when the harvest has left the fields clear for pasturage, come the Arabs of the Haurân and of Gilead. The same levels which of old gave an opening to the chariots of the Canaanites, now admit the inroad of these wandering shepherds. On one occasion even in ancient times, there was a migration of Bedouins into Palestine on a gigantic scale ; when the Midianites and Amalekites, and children of the east, encamped against the Israelites in their maritime plain, “with their cattle and their tents,” and “pitched” their tents in Esdraelon, and “lay along the valley like grasshoppers for multitude.”<sup>1</sup> This, doubtless, was a great exception, and in the flourishing times of the Jewish Monarchy and of the Roman Empire, the hordes of the Desert were kept out, or were, as in the case of the tribes of Petrea in the time of the Herods, brought within the range of a partial civilization. But now, like the sands of their own deserts which engulf the monuments of Egypt, no longer defended by a watchful and living population, they have broken in upon the country far and near ; and in the total absence of solitary dwelling-places—in the gathering together of all the settled inhabitants into villages,—and in the walls which, as at Jerusalem, enclose the cities round, with locked gates and guarded towers—we see the effect of the constant terror which they inspire. It is the same peculiarity of Eastern life, as was exhibited in its largest proportions in the vast fortifications with which Nineveh and Babylon shut themselves in against the attacks of the Bedouins of the Assyrian Desert, and in the great wall which still defends the Chinese empire against the Mongolian tribes, who are to the civilization of Northern Asia, what the Arabs are to that of the south.

<sup>1</sup> Judges vi. 3, 5, 33; vii. 12. See Chapter IX.